

Vol. 49
2022 WINTER

ISSN

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Special Issue

Karakami

A Traditional Edo Technique with a Serene Ambience

Explore

Two Low Environmental Impact
Materials to Help Realize a
Sustainable World

PAPER TOPICS

Flowery Tale:
Flower Vase Made of Paper That Opens Like a Book /
Other Paper Products

TSUNAGU 2022 Winter

TSUNAGU is a public relations magazine published by Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. An exploration in rediscovering a fascination with paper, we link paper and culture, paper and business, and paper and people.

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Karakami

A Traditional Edo Technique with a Serene Ambience

Karakami is a type of decorative paper imprinted with a rich variety of designs that is used as wallpaper and overlay in *fusuma* heavy sliding doors, *byobu* folding screens, and room partitions. Under soft light, *karakami* shines with a graceful shimmer and this elegant beauty creates a serene unobtrusive ambience, which has made it a beloved interior item in the living space of Japanese people since ancient times as a decorative element in Buddhist temples, teahouses, and traditional Japanese rooms. As a certified holder of Conservation Techniques for Cultural Properties, Yukio Koizumi of Karagen Inc. is Japan’s leading authority in the field of *karakami* making. In his unflinching handiwork dwells the spirit of craftsmanship dedicated to creating authentic pieces and the sense of mission to preserve for the next generations the traditional *karakami* techniques that date back to the Edo period.



(1)(3) Yukio Koizumi is imprinting popular designs featuring *hyakka* ("hundred flowers") motifs of camellia japonica, plum blossoms, peonies, chrysanthemum flowers, and pinks using paints that mix mica¹ with turmeric. (2) He uses brushes of different shapes and sizes depending on the type of *karakami* paper and the specifics of the order. (4) A sieve made of silk gauze and cheesecloth for applying paint on to woodblocks. (5) A *fusuma* sliding door created by Karagen, shimmering with the refined luster of mica powder.

The process of making *karakami* by woodblock printing



01

Funori (a seaweed-based paste), which will play the role of an adhesive, is melted by cooking, and then is mixed, using fingers, with mica, *gofun*, and pigments to make a paint.



02

Next, a process known as *gubiki* is performed, in which light-colored undercoat is applied to the *washi* paper using a flat brush. After the first layer of undercoat is applied, the *washi* paper is dried, and then one more layer is applied to make sure that there are no patches and unevenness in the color.



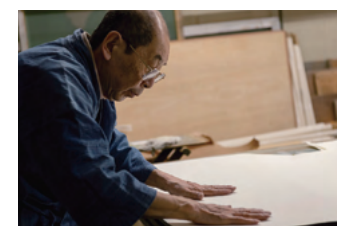
03

A large sieve is prepared by attaching a cloth to a round wooden frame, and the paint mixed with mortar is placed evenly into the sieve using a brush.



04

The paint is then applied over the woodblock by lightly pressing the sieve against it. The use of a sieve makes it possible to transfer the paint evenly and in an efficient manner.



05

The *washi* paper is carefully placed over the woodblock making sure to maintain the right orientation, and pressed against the woodblock with smoothing motions of the palm to transfer the engraved patterns to the *washi*.



06

The process is repeated five or six times by moving the paper over the woodblock so that the imprinted patterns are connected. In the case of double printing, the process is repeated 10 or 12 times per *fusuma*.



07

After confirming the finish of the imprinted patterns over the entire sheet, the paper is left to dry naturally. The atelier is lined with beautiful *karakami* papers imprinted with various multicolored patterns awaiting shipment.



08

Through this process, the craftsman creates a single *fusuma* paper sheet that combines universal refined designs with the warmth of *washi* paper to achieve a sophisticated ambience.

The manual process of creating one sheet at a time is what brings out the complex beauty and unique sensibility of *karakami* paper.

A soft whisper-like sound flows through the atelier, which is enveloped in soothing silence. The master's hand moves smoothly, as if swimming, along the surface of the traditional Japanese *washi* paper sheet spread on the large worktable as he applies, without the slightest hesitation, beautiful patterns and designs to the *washi*. Yukio Koizumi of Karagen Inc. is Japan's leading authority in the field of *karakami* making, and specifically the technique of applying pigments over the surface of woodblocks engraved by hand with traditional patterns and then transferring them to sheets of *washi* paper. As a descendant of Shichigoro Koizumi, the legendary *karakami* master of the Edo period (1603–1868) and founder of this family of craftsmen, Yukio Koizumi is the fifth generation master and third generation head of Karagen Inc., after its establishment as an independent company. Through his work, he is committed to preserving the traditional Edo craftsmanship techniques that date back to the mid-19th century. "Compared with Kyoto *karakami*, Tokyo *karakami* is made with larger engraved woodblocks. Originally, the woodblocks were smaller, designed to fit a standard size of paper in which twelve sheets of *karakami* paper made up

one *fusuma* door panel, but most of these woodblocks were destroyed in the fires of the Great Kanto Earthquake and the Great Tokyo Air Raids. Later, as it became possible to make larger sheets of *washi* paper, the size of Tokyo *karakami* was increased." Yukio Koizumi's father, Satoshi Koizumi, restored, through painstaking manual work, woodblocks from the Edo period, using as samples woodblocks and *fusuma* door panels that escaped the flames. The expansive, cascading designs, which feature diverse motifs, such as flowers and herbs, waves, and clouds, incorporate the aesthetics of the Edo townsmen culture and its infatuation with chic and elegance. *Karakami* (literally "Chinese paper") is, true to its name, a kind of decorative paper that originates from a type of patterned paper brought from China. It boasts an ancient history. Domestic production of *karakami* started back in the Heian period (794–1185), when it gained popularity among the aristocracy and was used as *ryoshi*² for copying sutras and writing poetry and as an interior decoration material in temples and residences built in the palatial style typical for that period. During the Edo period, *karakami* widely permeated the lifestyle of the warrior class, townspeople, and commoners, and came to

be used as decorative paper for *fusuma* sliding doors and wallpaper not only in the residences of feudal lords, Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, but also in the homes of townspeople. "I started creating *karakami* when I was around 20, but during the post-war period of rapid economic growth, cheap mass-produced printed paper took over the market and demand for hand-made *fusuma* paper gradually declined. Despite this trend, there was a growing momentum to revive production of authentic *karakami* paper, and once it was designated as a national traditional craftwork, the opportunities to work on restoration and repair of cultural assets using craftwork *karakami* techniques increased." Yukio Koizumi has so far participated in projects to restore and repair the Pine Teahouse in Hama-rikyu Gardens, the Dutch Trading Post on the island of Dejima in Nagasaki, the Unryuzan Shoko-ji Temple in Toyama Prefecture, and other buildings designated as Important Cultural Properties. As a *karakami* craftsman, in these projects he created the decorative paper used as overlay of *fusuma* sliding doors and walls, ceilings and folding screens. In recognition of his achievements, he has been recognized as

Traditional Craftsman by the national government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. After receiving the title "Tokyo Meister" (an excellence award granted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government), in 2019 the government of Japan awarded Yukio Koizumi The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays. There are several traditional decoration techniques for making Edo *karakami* paper. In the *hangi-oshi* (woodblock pressing) technique, patterns engraved on woodblocks are imprinted on *washi* paper by pressing the paper against the woodblock with smoothing motions using the palm of the hand. In the *sarasa* stencil technique, the paper is dyed using an *Ise katagami* stencil made of *washi* paper that is treated with persimmon tannin and then is engraved with patterns using a carving knife. In the *sunago* technique, gold or silver foil and metallic powder *sunago* (literally "sand") made by cutting foil into small pieces are sprinkled over the surface of the paper to form decorative patterns. At Yukio Koizumi's Karagen, diverse techniques are selectively used to create *karakami* paper with unique texture and feel. He demonstrated for us the *hangi-oshi* process. According to Yukio Koizumi, the most difficult

part of making *karakami* is the preparation of the paints. Color is added to *gofun* (a type of white granular pigment made from ground seashells), which is then mixed in water with the adhesive *funori* (a seaweed-based paste) or konjac potato paste, and the density and coloration are adjusted taking into account the temperature and humidity on that particular day. Light-colored undercoat is applied on to *washi* paper using a flat brush in a process known as *gubiki*, and then the prepared paint is applied through a special sieve over the entire surface of the woodblock. The *washi* paper is placed over the woodblock and pressed gently with smoothing motions using the palm of the hand to transfer the colors. The process is repeated by moving the paper over the woodblock, which is kept in a fixed position, creating beautiful *karakami* in which the connecting parts of the patterns match perfectly. According to the master, it is this manual process of lovingly imprinting the paper, one sheet at a time, which accounts for its complex aesthetic quality. Indeed, the sensitivity born from experience and the technique that has become the master's second nature give birth to products with a unique texture.



The production of large-sized paper (approximately 90cm x 180cm) led to the use of woodblocks larger than 90cm for making *karakami* paper in the Tokyo area.



Small-sized woodblocks known as *kiri-mochi* (literally "cut rice cakes"). They can be arranged in various combinations to create diverse patterns.

¹Mica: A sparkly mineral that, when powdered, has been used since ancient times as a highly-white dye for coloring *fusuma* sliding doors and wallpapers. It is also known as *kira* and *kirara* (onomatopoeic words for glitter and sparkle) for the way the light reflects off of its fine grains.
²Ryoshi: Paper used for writing documents and poetry, and for copying Buddhist sutras.



(1)(4) Various stationery items and everyday goods featuring *karakami* designs, such as Japanese-style bound notebooks, seal stamp notebooks, small notepads, and bookmarks. (2) A lampshade that uses *karakami* patterns to produce a light and shade effect. (3) From right to left: Karagen President Masayuki Koizumi, Yukio Koizumi, and his third son Akio Koizumi (5) A prototype of a cinerary urn created using only natural materials. Its development is financed through crowdfunding. The company is also advancing projects for development of products such as roll-screens made of *washi* paper, etc.



The paper used in this technique is a high-quality, thick *washi* with smooth glossy surface known as *torinoko-gami*. Strong and highly-durable, this paper enhances the beauty of colors, and these qualities have made it the material of choice for book binding and mounting of paintings since ancient times. “We use a lot of Echizen *torinoko-gami*, but in many cases we work with paper provided by the customers, and most of our jobs are requests to imprint certain patterns on paper brought in by a customer, so in a way we are perhaps quite fastidious about being unfastidious. Our job as *karakami* paper craftsmen is also to come up with ways to give the most beautiful finish to each type of paper brought to us.”

Different types of *washi* are handled differently, depending on the material from which they are made (*ganpi*, paper mulberry, or other). The ability to sufficiently grasp the characteristics of each type of paper and adjust the density of the paint and the volume of water accordingly is also part of the skills required of *karakami* paper craftsmen.

Demand for *fusuma* sliding doors is declining with each passing year, as the shift to Western-style rooms in Japanese homes advances. “We have opportunities to give talks in front of children at events to promote the appeal of *karakami*, but first we must recognize the fact that many children have no idea what *fusuma* are. That is why we must begin by asking them if they remember seeing doors with patterns drawn on them at their visits to traditional hot-spring inns. In the past, many households used to repaper their *fusuma* sliding doors before Obon and New Year, but things are different now.”

This situation is clearly a source of apprehension

for Yukio Koizumi, who has three sons. Two of them have followed in his footsteps, and they work together with their father to further refine the techniques for manufacturing of *karakami* paper. “I was never told to take over the family business, but as I observed from up close my father’s work from a very young age, following in his footsteps came naturally to me,” says his youngest son, Akio, who helped Yukio Koizumi all the way through high school and university and now works to refine his skills in *karakami* paper making. This earnest attitude in observing his father’s work brings a lot of joy and satisfaction to Yukio Koizumi.

In the past, every town in Japan had a workshop that made *fusuma* and *shoji* (light sliding doors), but as the lifestyle formats kept changing, the manufacturers of *karakami* paper have been going out of business one after the other. Today, Karagen appears to be the only workshop in the Tokyo area that makes *karakami*. Led by its president, Masayuki Koizumi, Karagen explores various approaches from new perspectives in order to keep alive this traditional craftsmanship that dates back to the Edo period. “Our goal is to apply traditional techniques and create new products tailored to the changing times. I believe that by working in tandem with professionals from various industries, we still have ample opportunities to create combinations with new materials and come up with innovative means of expression,” says Masayuki Koizumi. The *karakami* products of his company made by infusing novel ideas into traditional techniques born in the Edo period boast new added value and enjoy an ever-expanding field of applications, from stationery for everyday use to interior items with sophisticated design qualities.



Karagen Inc.
 Address: 1255-3 Osone, Yashio City, Saitama Prefecture
 Tel: +81-48-934-9438
 Website: <https://www.koizumihusumagami.com/english-top/>

Advance

Edge of paper

EDGE of PAPER

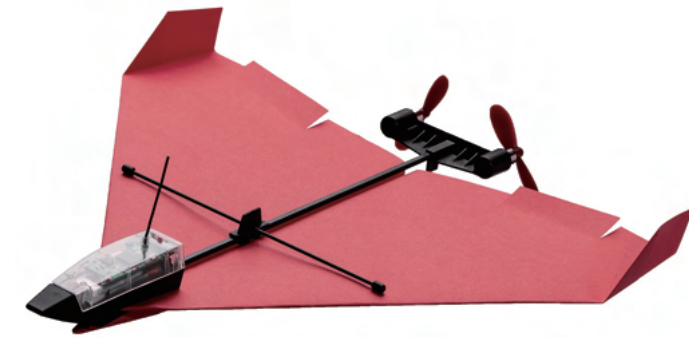
Enjoy acrobatic flights at your fingertip A smartphone-controlled “paper airplane” provides exciting new sensations

Folding paper airplanes is one of the simplest handicrafts. All you need is a single sheet of paper and you can begin making one right away. Creating an airplane that can fly well, however, is unexpectedly difficult. The properties of the airplane depend not only on the way the paper is folded, but also on the airplane’s center of gravity, its right-left balance, and the quality of the paper from which the plane is made. That’s why you have undoubtedly experienced a process of repeated trial and error while trying to make a paper airplane that flies well. This familiar handicraft has evolved with the changing times, and today there is a high-tech paper airplane that can be freely piloted via a smartphone.

POWERUP 4.0 is a paper airplane kit that enables the building of paper airplanes that can be controlled remotely simply by installing a special module. The flight preparation process is extremely easy. All you have to do is assemble the airplane following the templates included in the package, download and install the smartphone application, and connect the module via Bluetooth. Controlling the airplane is quite intuitive. Tilt your smartphone to make the airplane gyrate left and right. Touch the central button and the airplane will ascend or descend in accordance with the direction of your touch. Moreover, by tuning the fine controls of the airplane, you can make it perform acrobatic flights. This product is a source of endless entertainment.

Another fun feature of POWERUP 4.0 is the ability to build original airplanes. You can use any material as long as you keep the wing weight below 20 grams, so feel free to create your own one-of-a-kind remote-controlled airplane by cutting Styrofoam, plastics, or plant leaves in the shape of a plane.

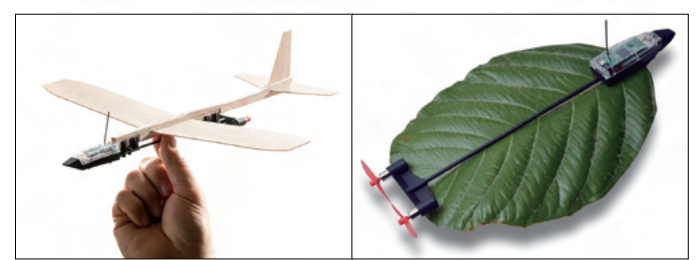
This unique paper airplane is a fusion of analog paper and digital technologies. Why not take this opportunity to put on a scarf, run out into a field or a park and enjoy a continuation of your childhood memories?



Intuitive control via iPhone/Android smartphones



The paper airplane is capable of reaching a speed of up to 9m per second, and can be operated at a maximum distance of 70m when connected to Bluetooth.



Any material is okay as long as the weight of the wings does not exceed 20g. Use your imagination and skills to come up with new ways to enjoy this product.

POWERUP 4.0: Smartphone Controlled Paper Airplane

Sold by: 3R SYSTEMS CORP. JAPAN
 Website: <https://3rrr.net/products/3r-pwr01>

Product size	Approx. 233mm x 77mm x 36mm
Charging time	Approx. 30min (via micro USB)
Communicable distance	Approx. 70m
Weight	Approx. 17g
Continued operation time	Approx. 10min
Input voltage / current	Approx. 5V / 0.3A
Compatible OS	iOS 12.0 and above / Android 5.0 and above
In the box	2×spare propellers, 1×crossbar, 1×micro USB cable, 4×paper airplane templates (additional templates can be downloaded from the product official website), 1×trim card, 1×quick user guide



Presenting the KPP Group's Diligent Efforts toward Realizing a Sustainable Society

KPP Sustainable Times

The recirculation and recycling of finite resources and energy has become an urgent concern in contemporary society. At KPP, we are determined to increase our corporate value by ensuring that our business operations help to build a sustainable society. This effort is grounded in our management mission to realize a recycling-oriented society.

material 01 100% Pulp Translucent Barrier Paper Spotlighted as a Sustainable Packaging Material

Sylvicta

Today, as the issue of marine pollution from plastics is coming to the fore, consumer awareness is evolving, as well. There is now demand for an immediate move away from plastics, which have been the predominant material used for packaging. In our role as a trading company specializing in paper, KPP is committed to helping to build a recycling-oriented society. Sylvicta is one solution we propose: a paper offering functionality comparable to plastic.

Sylvicta — a translucent barrier paper made of 100% pulp that is suitable for contact with food products — is produced by Arjowiggins, a paper manufacturer that has been in business since 1761. With its function as a barrier to oxygen, smells, mineral oils, and grease the paper helps packaged products retain aroma and freshness. Its properties can be even further enhanced using manufacturing processes designed specifically for the intended use, while still letting the appealing basic properties of the material shine. As it is made of paper, Sylvicta accepts a range of printing processes and coatings, from offset printing and flexography to embossing, lamination, and die cutting.

A sustainable packaging material that is biodegradable and compostable as paper after use, Sylvicta offers effective freshness retention as a packaging product, as well as a minimal environmental footprint.



Left : Can be made into stand-up pouches with heat sealing.
Right: Function as barrier to oils make it an optimal replacement for food products' plastic film overlays.



KPP produces and distributes samples of original bags made of Sylvicta. Please contact us for details.

Anticipated Uses

1. Functions as a barrier against oils, allowing use as a backing paper for food products.
2. Translucent design keeps contents visible, allowing users to see products in the packaging.
3. Use of heat sealing to create pouches makes the material processable into pillow bags, three-side seal bags, and sachets.
4. Compostability permits eco-friendly labeling.
5. Further processing development potential beyond just design also opens the door to specific uses as an intermediate material.

Sylvicta's Appealing Features

1. Sylvicta is biodegradable and compostable as paper, since it is produced from 100% pulp.
2. Its translucency gives packaging a high-class feel and stimulates customer interest by showing off the product.
3. Strong function as barrier to oxygen, smells, mineral oils and grease helps packaged products retain aroma and freshness.

material 02 100% Recyclable Paperboard Optimal for Displays and Signs

Coala Air Board



Antalis is the European leader in Papers and Packaging, as well as a leader and innovator in the Visual Communications industry.

As such, we have an important role to play in order to limit our environmental impact. We give full consideration to sustainability, through responsible sourcing and our objective Green Star rating system^{*1}. We are committed to delivering innovative and more sustainable alternative solutions for our customers.

Our Coala Airboard brand, a beehive shaped paper board, is an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional hard synthetic substrates^{*2}. In fact, Coala Airboard has been awarded the highest

rating of 5 stars in the Antalis Green Star systemTM.

Coala Airboard, 100% recyclable and with a recycled paper core, is available in two different finishes: natural kraft or smooth high white. Both offer excellent print quality and are suitable for a variety of digital printing technologies. Coala Airboard is easy to cut, fold and customize, making it ideal for sustainable displays and signage. It is also available in a variety of cell structures and thicknesses, allowing customers to choose the right strength and rigidity for each project. From exhibition stands to art installations, Coala Airboard is the perfect sustainable alternative for a wide range of applications.

*1: A system for evaluating products from an environmental perspective, combining the origin of the raw material and its recyclability

*2: A board made from virgin fossil resources like plastics

Selling agency



Company name Antalis
 Head office Paris, France
 Address 8 rue de Seine 92100 Boulogne Billancourt France 2000
 Employee 4,150 people (as of 21 July)
 Base 39 countries (Europe, South America, Asia)
 Business Paper and paper-related products, packaging, visual communication



The QR code below will take you to a video about the Coala Airboard.



01 | A flower vase you can open like a book

Flowery Tale

Sold by: Dainichi Sankyo Co., Ltd.
<https://mecli.jp/products/flowery-tale>



This interior piece looks like a book at first glance, but when you take off the cover and open it up, a semi-3D silhouette emerges. This is Flowery Tale, a stylish book-shaped flower vase with three silhouette patterns. Open the book and insert a test tube in between the front and back covers, and you can use it as a single-flower vase. Stacked layers of hard-textured paper create the silhouette effect. The shadows change depending on the angle of light coming in, so you can enjoy different looks with the passage of time. You can also switch bottom and top, allowing you to choose the silhouette that fits your flower—from a total of six types. Another great aspect is that you can enjoy styling it to match your taste in flower color and variety, as well as a room's interior. When not using it with a flower, just close it up and display it as a book. You can put it on a bookshelf, so it won't take up a lot of space. The vase surface and mount use highly water-repellent and water-resistant OK Rainguard, made from 100% natural pulp. Spilled drops of water will bounce off, so don't worry—even if it gets wet, the water won't seep in. So why not introduce two heart-warming items to an "inorganic" room—flowers that add rich color to everyday life, and paper vases to display them with added beauty?

Tomonori Yamada
 Sales Division 2
 Dainichi Sankyo Co., Ltd.



Since you can enjoy three vases per book, you can choose the vase according to the size and shape of the flower, as well as your mood that day or the look of the room. We named it Flowery Tale because it evokes a fairy tale that tells of a life with flowers. With more time being spent at home these days, our team is coming together to create new products that envision a scene where many people are enjoying life with flowers. You can enjoy them yourself, or use them to convey warm regards to the precious people in your life, such as those who have helped you, or those who you haven't been able to visit lately.

02 | A convenient soap-infused hand towel

ARAFU, the Soap Hand Towel

Sold by: Mizobata Shiko Printing Co., Ltd.
<https://www.kindai-net.jp/SHOP/51231/154896/list.html>

You're out on a work assignment or enjoying the outdoors, and your hands get dirty, but there's no soap! All you need is running water and ARAIFU PLUS will solve this problem. Its fluffy non-woven fabric is soaked with copious liquid soap that is easy on the hands and skin, so just wet it with water and rub it in to create a robust lather that gently removes even the toughest stains. You can then rinse it out and continue to use it as a handkerchief. Recommended as an item for the age of the "New Normal."

Takehiko Nishi
 Director and Department Manager
 Mizobata Shiko Printing Co., Ltd.



ARAFU was developed amid recent shifts in lifestyles as a hand towel you can use to wash your hands. This product is compact and individually wrapped, so it's easy to take on the go, and is popular with many people as a non-woven hand towel that does it all—from washing to wiping off—with one sheet. Perfect for use as a novelty or small gift, an amenity from a restaurant or hotel, or to stock up on to prepare for disasters, so if you are interested, feel free to contact us.



Size: 50 x 120mm (before use) / 260 x 160mm (when spread out)



03 | A flower gift set with color-in postcard

Color-in Postcard Series

Sold by: HIBIYA-KADAN FLORAL CO., LTD.
<https://www.hibiyakadan.com/product.html?pskunumber=TS1994>

HIBIYA-KADAN continues to create fresh new floral services as an industry pioneer. The gift set it launched in July 2021 is the Color-in Postcard Series. Decorating the seasonal bouquet is a meticulously detailed 3D color-in flower postcard. The symbolic flower phrases matching the flower illustration on the addressee side help convey deeper feelings to your gift's recipient. Since the postcard illustration designs are also fun to color for adults, you'll get the most out of your stay-at-home time. HIBIYA-KADAN also offers a "Hana-no-Hi 365 Days" subscription service that regularly delivers fresh seasonal flowers to your home or other desired location. For these deliveries, a flower designer carefully selects only the freshest and highest quality flowers. The lineup of delivery options include sweets and tea with flowers as a set to let you choose the service that best fits your lifestyle.



Public Relations Dept.
 HIBIYA-KADAN FLORAL CO., LTD.



Flowers and paper have a very close relationship, from flower wrapping to the message card, to the materials that protect the flowers from damage. Paying special care to the paper color and texture can change the image of the flowers and the gift itself.

Making Letters Speak

Tomone Uemura

Humans are creatures who express their thoughts. I feel that letters are the most profound and noble form of human expression. When it comes to letters, hand-written letters are best.

When we try to read between the lines, we can see the personality of the writer.

Vol. 27: Koichi Baba

It was in 1964, when I was 26, that I transferred from the film studio where I had been working to a television station that had just been launched. There, I was assigned to the Programming Section and found myself working directly under Koichi Baba. While of somewhat small stature, Baba was mentally and physically sharp, and seemed to never show an unguarded moment, an impression that may have been all the stronger for me as a new person. I myself—a person who made slip-ups right and left—was later appraised as being sharp as a tack, and that gives me the feeling that our impressions of people do probably evolve over time.

One time, he demonstrated something I felt I would never be able to accomplish myself. We were holding an audition at the studio for a planned quiz show and he volunteered to be the host, pulling it off with flying colors. As I later found out, he had previously been a radio announcer.

The way he had opinions on everything and never held back on expressing them impressed me, and he was also very attentive to what others had to say. Those of us working under him continuously learned from his example. What a sense of freedom there was, with nothing left for conjecture. Our newly established television studio continued to find itself in a no man's land in terms of ratings and revenue alike, however, Baba would draw up programming charts of his own to propose to senior management. Though I feel like I, as a newcomer, probably was not given the chance to take part in their drafting, "programming" connotes the expression of management's intent, and as such, I imagine Baba must have drawn up his personal programming charts with an eye on management.

Away from work, Baba was fun to be around. He loved mahjong, and after work we would crowd around the mahjong table day after day. In those days, there was little else to do! Though not present myself, I heard rumors that Baba once lost 160,000 yen in one night playing mahjong with colleagues and paid it on the spot in cash—this at a time when I had a monthly salary of perhaps 30,000 yen.

Another memory from those days was being invited to his apartment in Yotsuya, Tokyo together with a few other colleagues late one night after playing mahjong. As we barged in, I was introduced to his wife, Emi, and given a poetry collection she had just published. I was also shown a commemorative album of theirs, in which Baba had inscribed a funny love poem by Mitsuharu Kaneko starting out, "Oh, my love. At last I have become your poop." Reflecting now on meeting Kaneko and his family some years later and the long friendship we developed, it makes me nostalgic to think that my very first encounter with him was through that album.

Two years after I joined the station, they ended up scaling down operations and letting go of many people, and one of them was Baba. I seem to recall that in the early stages of this he took part in a union-led struggle to have the dismissals withdrawn.

I was amazed by the way Baba hopped off on a trip to the Soviet Union right away after receiving notice of his dismissal, saying he would like to have a look at a new land. This was in the days of increasing U.S.-Soviet bipolarization. The way he was committed to plunging headlong with ever more enthusiasm even amid adverse circumstances astonished me as something I knew I was not capable of myself.

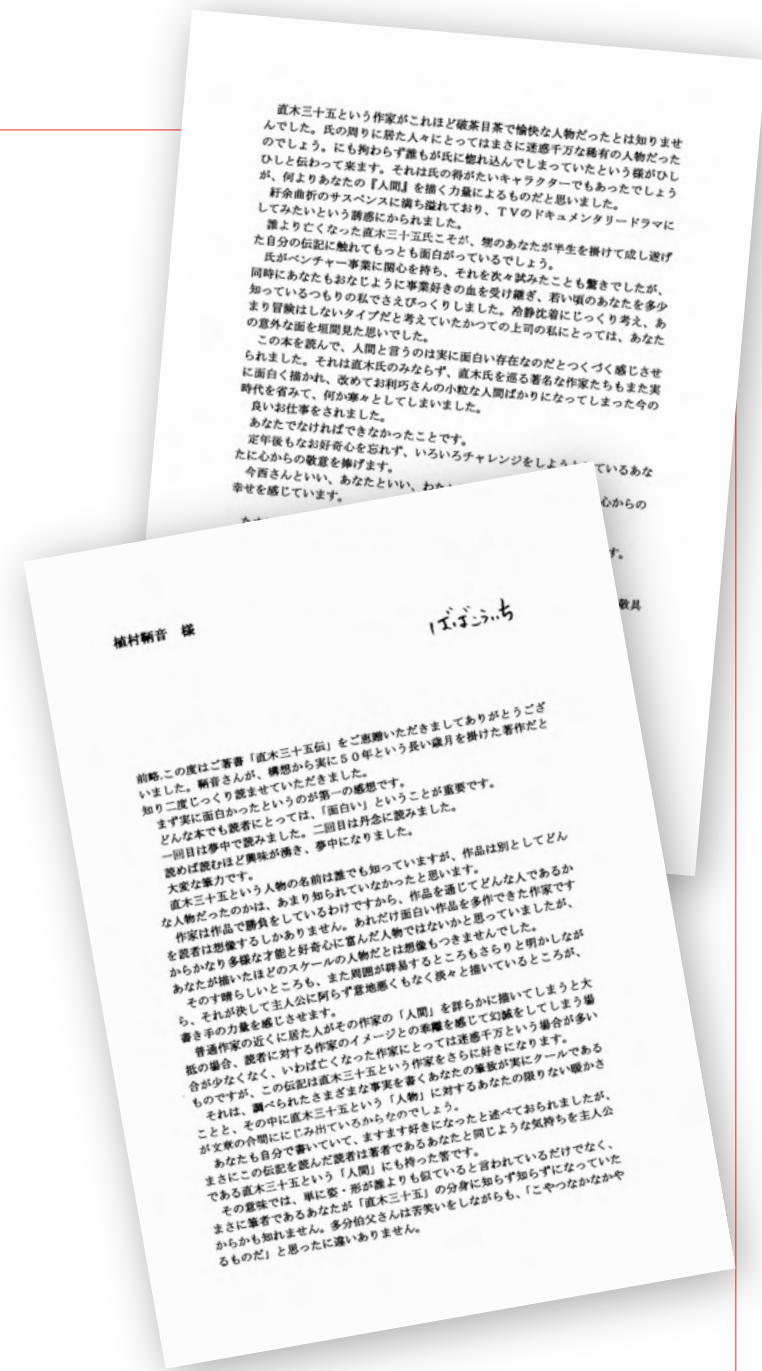
Once back in Japan, he began writing his name in all hiragana. Some may still remember his active contributions in the domains of television and written works, such as his *Nattoku Ikanai Kona* ("The 'Unconvincing Things' Corner") feature on TV Asahi's "Afternoon Show" and his book *Sengo Nihon o Dame ni Shita 100-nin* ("100 People Who Spoiled Postwar Japan"). His rebellious journalistic spirit lives on today in his daughter, Mika Tsutsumi.

Even after his own departure, Baba would pay occasional visits to me (I had managed to hang on at the station), offering somewhat pointed planning proposals and opinions as a mentor on the programming I was overseeing. He often sent letters as well, many of which conveyed something to the effect of, "You are achieving what I was unable to bring to fruition myself. How truly wonderful!" To receive words of praise from someone who has engaged in the same work is truly gratifying, as it indicates a sense of shared values.

After retirement, I sent Baba my first published book, *Naoki Sanjugo-den* ("The Life Story of Sanjugo Naoki"). Upon reading it, he sent this letter conveying his impressions, typed up in Microsoft Word.

"Thank you for the gift of your book, *Naoki Sanjugo-den* ... My first time through, I was immersed. The second, I read through it meticulously. The more I read, the more it piqued my interest, and I was totally absorbed. You have tremendous writing ability... Reading your book gave me a keen sense of how truly intriguing human existence is. Not only Naoki, but the other celebrated authors around him, too, were depicted in such a fascinating way. When I reflected again on our present age, in which everyone seems to be such a well-behaved little character, I somehow felt bleak. You did a very good job... Even in retirement, you have retained your inquisitive spirit and continue to take on various challenges. For that, I offer you my respect."

While I cannot say for sure whether this letter nurtured my growth, I do believe such words of praise serve to encourage or "fertilize" a person's development.



Koichi Baba

Broadcast journalist and commentator
1933–2010



Photo courtesy of TOYO KEIZAI INC. / Afla

Born in Osaka Prefecture on March 28, 1933. After graduating from the Tohoku University Faculty of Economics, he worked for Nippon Cultural Broadcasting Inc. and Fuji Television Network, Inc. before joining the 1964-established Tokyo Channel 12, Ltd. (now TV TOKYO Corporation). In 1966, he became a freelance broadcast journalist and pursued an active career as a television program host and reporter. He wrote a series of works on themes of politics and social issues, with notable titles including *Sengo Nihon o Dame ni Shita 100-nin* ("100 People Who Spoiled Postwar Japan"), *Nisemono Jidai* ("Age of Imitation"), *Terebi wa Kore de Yoi no ka* ("Can TV Go on Like This?"), *Shichoritsu Kyoso: Sono Omote to Ura* ("The Ratings Race: On the Surface and Behind the Scenes"), *Kaikaku Danko* ("Carrying Out Reforms"), and *Katsuryoku Koreijin* ("Elderly People with Vitality"). Journalist Mika Tsutsumi is his second daughter.



Brief Biography of the Author

Tomone Uemura
Essayist

After graduating from the Department of History, the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Sciences at Waseda University in 1962, he worked at Toei Co., Ltd. before entering TV Tokyo Corporation, where he was later appointed to managing director of TV Tokyo and president and representative director of PROTX.

RECOMMEND SPOT

Amacusa Collegio Museum

Photos courtesy of Amacusa Collegio Museum



Left: *ESOPO No Takarabako*, an exhibit of dolls on themes of *Aesop's Fables* / Center: A model of the Western ship used by the Tensho Embassy on its voyage / Right: A Gutenberg metal type printing press



Replicas of precious *Amakusa-bon* that were printed by the first letterpress printer in Japan. Right: *Heike Monogatari*, which is familiar to people today. Left: *Aesop's Fables*, the first translation of this book in Japan.

Introducing the history and culture of missionary training schools, including Japan's first letterpress and printed materials

"Collegio" is a Portuguese word meaning college. Amacusa Collegio, once the highest school of Christian learning in Japan, opened at the end of the 16th century in the Amakusa area of Kumamoto Prefecture. The Amacusa Collegio Museum tells the story of the Amakusa Christian culture of that age. Through exhibits that include a Gutenberg metal type printing press, a model of a foreign ship, and classical European instruments (all reproductions) brought back by the Tensho Embassy, a diplomatic mission to Europe led by four young Japanese men, the museum broadly introduces this legacy of western culture and the embassy. At Amacusa Collegio, a Gutenberg printing press was used to print textbooks for foreign missionaries and students. These books are known as *Amakusa-bon* (Amakusa books). Reproductions of books of high cultural value, such as *Heike Monogatari* ("Tales of Heike") and *Aesop's Fables*, which were published around that time, are on display. Come and experience these historical documents, along with the history of Christianity in Japan in those times.

MESSAGE

In the 16th century, Amacusa Collegio, which was established in Kawaura-machi, the home town of one of five powerful members of the Amakusa clan, flourished as a center for the transmission of the Western culture of the day, including the study of Latin, philosophy, and theology, as well as the metal typeset printing of books. The Amacusa Collegio Museum houses various exhibits that hand down these cultural assets to future generations. When you are in Amakusa, please come and visit.

Kyomi Okabe

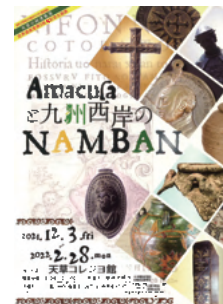
Director, Amacusa Collegio Museum

Amacusa and NAMBAN on Kyushu's West Coast

Open now through Monday, February 28

This exhibition commemorates the third anniversary of the registration of the Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki and Amakusa regions on the World Heritage List.

A "History Talk Show" will be held on Sunday, January 30, and a "Gallery Talk" on Saturday, February 12. Please contact Amacusa Collegio Museum directly to attend.



Amacusa Collegio Museum

Address: 175-13 Shiraki Kawachi, Kawaura-machi, Amakusa City, Kumamoto Prefecture

Open: 8:30 - 17:00 (last admission 16:30)

Admission: Adults: 200 yen, high school students: 150 yen, elementary and junior high school students: 100 yen

Closed: Thursdays (or the following day if Thursday is a national holiday), year-end and New Year holidays (Dec. 30 - Jan. 1)

Inquiries: +81-969-76-0388

Website: <http://hp.amakusa-web.jp/a1050/MyHp/Pub/Default.aspx>

*Schedule is subject to change due to the state of the COVID-19 pandemic. Check the website for details.



KPP is considering adopting a holding company structure

KPP has started to consider transitioning to a holding company structure by October of this year. The implementation of this plan will be subject to approval at the annual general meeting of shareholders scheduled for late June 2022.

Background to these considerations

KPP has been actively pursuing overseas mergers and acquisitions with the objective of expanding global market share and maximizing earnings by accomplishing business portfolio reform, while working in China and ASEAN countries to maximize synergies by restructuring KPP Group companies. We expect these overseas development efforts to result in achieving a ratio of overseas sales to the Group's total sales of 54% in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. In addition to entering a new stage as a global company that is one of the world's three largest paper-trading companies* in terms of business scale, We have decided to consider transitioning to a holding company structure to celebrate KPP's 100th anniversary in 2024.

*Based on research by KPP (a paper-trading company is a specialized trading company whose main business is the wholesaling of paper and pulp products, and packaging-related products.)

Objective

Our objective is to strengthen global governance and reform our portfolio, and furthermore to expand our scale of business and promote sustainable management.

Scheme

We envision a parallel arrangement whereby KPP is separated into a holding company and an operating company, with the operating company controlling domestic business under the umbrella of the holding company and the existing core companies managing each region, such as Spicers Limited in Oceania and Antalis S.A.S. in Europe and South America.

Schedule

Implementation is scheduled for October 2022.



"Town ecom," a system for collecting and recycling recovered paper, is set up at MITO SKY PARK in Ibaraki Prefecture

KPP's recovered paper collection and recycling system, "Town ecom," has been adopted by more than 400 supermarkets and other retail stores throughout Japan. The system lets users bring in used paper from home at any time and receive points based on the weight of the paper. It's recent installation at MITO SKY PARK, a multipurpose plaza operated by the JR East Mito Branch, marks the first time the system has been put in place at a location other than a retail store.

MITO SKY PARK, which opened in May last year in the JR East Mito Branch Building, is a plaza where residents and visitors can experience and share the charms of Mito, including delicious food and fun things to do. It has an event space and a parking lot that can be rented by the month. The recycling coupons issued by MITO SKY PARK's "Town ecom" can be used toward shopping on the 1st floor of Mito Station Building Excel and the fresh fish department on the 3rd floor of Excel Minami Shopping Center.



Location	MITO SKY PARK Event Space, 1-4-47 Sannomaru, Mito City, Ibaraki Prefecture (A 7-minute walk from the North Exit of Mito Station)
In use from	October 1, 2021 (Friday)
Operating hours	10:00-14:00 *Except Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays

For more details on Town ecom, see the following website.
<https://www.kppc.co.jp/en/ecom/town.html>



Madoka Tanabe, KPP Director of the Board, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, visits Afan Woodland

On October 25th last year, KPP Director of the Board, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Madoka Tanabe visited Afan Woodland in Kurohime, Nagano Prefecture. Afan Woodland is a forest teeming with biodiversity that was restored over the course of 35 years by the writer and naturalist C.W. Nicol, who passed away in April 2020.

The C.W. Nicol Afan Woodland Trust has been managing the forest since 2002. KPP has supported the foundation's efforts and has been an official sponsor since 2015. It is said that when C.W. Nicol first bought the forest, he called its largest and oldest tree the "Mother Tree," and said he wanted to sleep under it after he died. A memorial stone has been laid at this spot, and today C.W. Nicol rests in peace there, his wish granted. On this visit, we were also taken to this location.

April will mark the third anniversary of C.W. Nicol's passing, and we plan to run a special feature article in the April issue to share some thoughts about him.



KPP Director of the Board, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Madoka Tanabe (left), C.W. Nicol Afan Woodland Trust Senior Managing Director Risako Noguchi (center), and Trust Chief Director Izumi Morita (right)



The memorial stone



In C.W. Nicol's study



mitaka nova

4-6-7 Shimorenjaku, Mitaka City, Tokyo
TEL: +81-422-90-3650

Business hours vary depending on the day of the week. Please check the calendar on the website when planning your visit.

Closed Mondays.

<http://www.mitakanova.jp/>



A community book cafe fulfilling the dream to try new things

In a quiet residential area of Mitaka City's Shimorenjaku neighborhood stands the community book cafe, mitaka nova—a bookshop, cafe, and event space rolled into one, established in 2019. Owner Yuta Asano, a licensed architect by trade, set his mind on opening a shop of his own, he says, coming across the property while taking part in a workshop on renovating and revitalizing vacant shop spaces.

“I had this idea that I would love to create a shop space amenable to experimentation, where you could explore all these different possibilities and try them out, as I was getting more and more involved in the work of developing a space mindful of not only the building's layout, but also the communication it would facilitate.”

Carrying new and used titles alike, mitaka nova stocks a selection of books on philosophy, art, anthropology, and more,

curated by avid reader Asano. The shop brims with novel ideas to convey the pleasures of reading to customers of all ages as well. With RECO BOOK, mitaka nova stocks titles recommended by customers for others to read, offering them for sale along with recommendation cards explaining their rationale. At the Book Exchange Shelf, children can bring in a book they have finished reading to trade for another of their choice.

Kiyoshi Chiba, who takes care of the cafe section, for his part, mastered the art of coffee brewing in his retirement while participating in Mitaka City-sponsored public lectures and volunteer activities. Just as he was strengthening his resolve to contribute to community development through his refined hand-drip coffee, he crossed paths with Asano. It was through this meeting, he says, that he decided to take on the role of

master barista for the cafe as a joint proprietor.

“For me, having spent so many years just commuting from my home to work and back without giving an attentive eye to the local area. This is a place that offers me a new chance for self-expression,” says Chiba. “How nice if it could serve that kind of role for visitors to the space as well.”

And with just that spirit, mitaka nova offers hourly event space rental as well, hosting a diverse range of events, from private guitar lessons to SDGs workshops, miso-making classes, and more. mitaka nova is a space filled with the dream these two proprietors had: to offer a space where new things people want to try out can be translated into action. As a book cafe presenting new expressions day by day, the space confers colorful flair and abundance to the lives of those who come through its doors.



We have adopted a bookbinding method free of staples, paste and heat, taking into consideration recycling and the risk of injuries.



国際紙パルプ商事株式会社
KOKUSAI PULP&PAPER CO.,LTD.

Corporate Communications Office
Address: 6-24 Akashi-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan
TEL: +81-3-3542-4111 (main switchboard number)
URL: <https://www.kppc.co.jp/en/>